MISCONDUCT PROBE
Rep. John Conyers quits committee post amid ethics investigation. A3

FEDERAL COURT
Suit challenges Trump's pick for consumer financial bureau. A9

CRASH STATISTICS
State police say there were two fatal crashes over the holiday break. B1

PARTLY SUNNY ★★
Breezy, with highs in the mid-40s. A2

Hartford Courant

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When Hurricane Maria plunged Puerto Rico into darkness and deprivation, a group of men in Connecticut decided to step up. Determined to help family and friends in need, they set out on an unforgettable journey.

OUTSIDE A HOME in Bayamon, Puerto Rico, from left, David Velasquez, Elliot Matos and Jimmy Velasquez greet Miguel Torres, who stands on the other side of the bars in his gated carport. Torres was reluctant to open the door despite the hurricane relief supplies the men had brought. The Connecticut team often delivered supplies in the cover of darkness so they didn't call attention to themselves.

INTO THE NIGHT

DARKNESS
Second of five parts

BAYAMON, Puerto Rico – The house was darkened and locked up tight. Elliot Matos knocked on the door, calling Miguel Torres' name.

This suburb of San Juan has some of the highest crime rates on the island. Jimmy Velasquez and Matos both issued strict warnings to their team members. Keep your eyes open, pay attention. Don't dally too long in one place; it's hard to hide a 20-foot tall box truck.

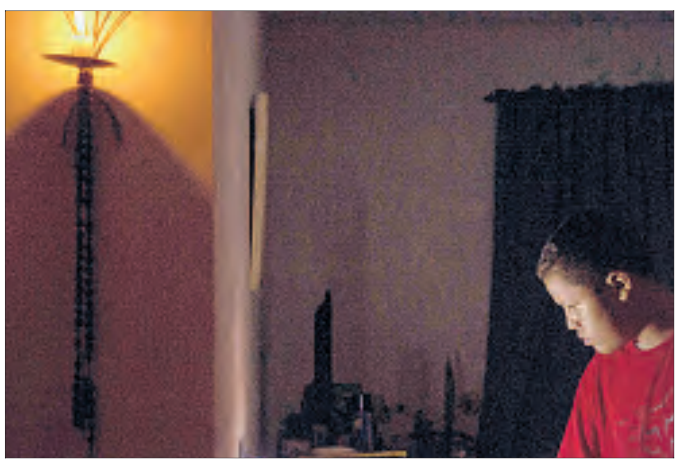
"Doing the deliveries at night is safest for these people," Matos explained. "We use the dark as cover so that we don't put the people we're delivering to in immediate danger to predatory practices. It's for our peace of mind as much as theirs."

They arrived in Bayamón at an hour when few are awake. Unfortunately, among that group was Torres, one of the people the team had come to this city to find.

When Matos finally got Torres to the prisonlike gate he has securing his carport, he was skeptical and

DARKNESS, A6

HARTFORD *to the* HOMELAND
Delivering Relief To Puerto Rico



Under a candlelight lamp in his home, Angel Baez Nieves, 13, of Bayamon looks down at newly arrived relief supplies that made it to his family's home outside of San Juan. His family has been without electricity and running water since Hurricane Maria devastated the island more than 60 days ago.

Story By VINNY VELLA | vvella@courant.com **Photos By PATRICK RAYCRAFT** | praycraft@courant.com

PARTISAN DIVIDE

Congress Funding Battle Looms

Government Shutdown Deadline Dec. 8

By MIKE DEBONIS and ED O'KEEFE
Washington Post

WASHINGTON — Congress will return to Washington, D.C., this week to confront a series of highly charged partisan issues as a deadline for extending government funding approaches, raising the specter of a December government shutdown.

Leaders of both parties have publicly played down the possibility of a showdown next month. Funding expires on Dec. 8, and both sides have floated the possibility of a short-term stopgap to push negotiations until just before Christmas.

"There shouldn't be any discussion about shutting down the government. We can make this thing work. We just need to get people at the table, negotiate it," Sen. John Thune, S.D., the third-ranking Republican senator, said on "Fox News Sunday."

But informal talks have been abortive, and bitter partisan divides over spending, health care and immigration threaten to set up an

CONGRESS, A10

WEIGHING OPTIONS

Webster Bank CEO Considers Next Phase

Jim Smith To Retire After 30 Years At Helm

By KENNETH R. GOSSELIN
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WATERBURY — With his retirement as chief executive of Webster Bank just weeks away, Jim Smith knows well the speculation that he might consider running for public office, even governor.

"Sure, so I have not seriously considered public office," Smith said in an interview in the board room of Webster's Waterbury headquarters. "I've really thought my interest and my background being more on the policy side of things. And I think I could make an impression."

Smith, 68, said he is keeping his options open "especially on the public policy side" as he cedes the day-to-day management of the bank his father founded in 1935 and the one he has led as CEO since 1987. Smith will remain board chairman.

SMITH, A10

UCONN'S CHANGING OF THE GUARD

As the UConn football team looks toward an offseason of rebuilding and recruiting, the men's and women's basketball teams try to build momentum in their young seasons. The men closed out the PK80 — Phil Knight Invitational Sunday with a comprehensive loss. What had started out as a promising weekend ended with a 102-67 thud versus Arkansas, showing that not just the football team has some work to do. The women, fueled by guards Crystal Dangerfield and Kia Nurse, have one more PK80 game Tuesday night. **Sports, Pages C1, C3, C5**

Village Warned

Elders of a village in Egypt where militants killed 305 people in a mosque had been warned by Islamic State operatives to stop collaborating with security forces and to suspend rituals associated with Islam's mystical Sufi movement.
World & Nation, Page A4

Crocheting Hope

A Manchester woman is making 500 scarves for homeless people. They will be distributed at the Winter Boot Party Dec. 9. **Connecticut, Page B1**

Seven Straight Wins

Tom Brady, not pictured, tossed four TD passes and the Patriots pushed through injuries for a 35-17 win over the Dolphins. **Sports, Page C1**

Speed Limits Study

Hartford city council members want the public works department and state traffic officials to undertake a strenuous review of the city's speed limits, with careful attention paid to the city's busiest streets, including Blue Hills Avenue and Park Street.
Connecticut, Page B1

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CLASSIFIED **A8**
COMICS **B6, B7**
LOTTERY **A2**
OBITUARIES **B2, B4**
OPINION **A11**
PUZZLES **B7**

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